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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000891

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TAGS: PGOV PINS IZ PINR

SUBJECT: FORMER PROVINCIAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN SAYS PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEEPLY FLAWED

Classified By: PRT Team Leader Joseph Gregoire for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: Provincial Council (PC) member Mazen Makiya (Shia, Independent) told PRToffs March 9 that party politics, poor leadership and lack of organization plague Baghdad's provincial government. Makiya, who was PC Chairman from March 2005 to December 2005, said current PC Chairman Mueen Al-Kadhimi (SCIRI) rules autocratically and allows sectarian considerations to unduly influence his decision making. End Summary.

Former PC Chairman Paints Bleak Picture of Council

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¶2. (C) PC member Maziya told PRToffs March 9 that party politics, poor leadership and lack of organization plague Baghdad's provincial government. Makiya, who was the PC Chairman from March 2005 to December 2005, said that anti-Sunni bias routinely prevents constructive debate on project proposals. Makiya added that the council's 28-member Shia United Iraqi Alliance majority (composed of SCIRI, Dawa, Fadhilah and Sadrists members) runs the council essentially without opposition. (Note: Sunnis boycotted January 2005 provincial elections. The Provincial Council is comprised of 51 members, 49 of whom are Shia. One of the two Sunni members elected as representatives of Allawi's List has stopped working entirely and the other is a communist. End note.)

¶3. (C) Makiya said closed lists during the last provincial election brought to power a council whose members are beholden to the parties that appointed them, rather than qualified individuals dedicated to serving the public.

¶4. (C) Makiya said members routinely miss meetings due to foreign travel, difficulties arriving to the PC building because of security concerns, and general absenteeism. Makiya, who chairs the council's Strategic Planning Committee, said that less than half of his committee's members usually show up for committee meetings. Makiya also complained that repeated requests to the PC leadership for basic equipment such as overhead projectors have been denied.

¶5. (C) Makiya said most PC members have hired staff based on party affiliation rather than qualifications. The shortage of professional technocrats hinders efficiency in PC work.

Makiya Criticizes Al-Kadhimi's Leadership

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¶6. (C) Makiya told PRToffs that work is often stalled for weeks at a time while current PC Chairman Mueen Al-Kadhimi travels to Iran.

¶7. (C) Makiya claimed Al-Kadhimi is an Iranian citizen who lived in Iran for around 20 years. Makiya said Al-Kadhimi's

"unnaturally" close relationship with the Iranian regime borders on treason. (Note: We do not know for certain that Al-Kadhimi is an Iranian citizen or exactly how long he lived in Iran, but we believe it was at least 10 years. Al-Kadhimi dodges questions on the subject. End note.)

Sour Grapes?

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¶ 8. (C) Makiya's comments on Al-Kadhimi are consistent with what Baghdad PRT has seen but must be taken with a grain of salt, since Makiya has some professional grievances against Al-Kadhimi. Makiya was a Dawa member but withdrew from the party in December 2005 to run for the Council of Representatives on the National Democratic Alliance list. Makiya was chosen as PC chairman in March 2005 as part of a deal between Dawa (of which Makiya was a member at the time) and SCIRI. The deal was that a Dawa member would fill the chairmanship and a SCIRI member would be deputy chairman. When Makiya withdrew from Dawa, SCIRI members of the PC complained that deal was null and void and voted Al-Kadhimi into the position.

Comments

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¶ 9. (C) Makiya's comments track with some problems Baghdad PRT has observed, including poor leadership and general disorganization. PRToffs frequently find various PC meetings poorly attended or cancelled altogether.

¶ 10. (C) PRToffs can confirm that PC Chairman Al-Khadhimi frequently travels to Iran and is often gone for weeks at a time, during which PC work stalls. Al-Kadhimi's first of two

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wives lives in Tehran. When he last returned to Baghdad from Tehran in early March, he had been in Iran for at least four weeks and on the Haj in Saudi Arabia for about two weeks before that. Other PC members hesitate to make decisions in Al-Kadhimi's absence. End Comments.

SPECKHARD